

Message Text

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ACTION NEA-10

INFO OCT-01 EUR-12 ISO-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-03 H-02

INR-07 L-02 NSAE-00 NSC-05 PA-01 PRS-01 SP-02 SS-15

USIA-06 OMB-01 IO-10 SAI-01 SAM-01 AGR-05 EB-07

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FM AMEMBASSY TUNIS

TO SECSTATE WASHDC PRIORITY 9151

INFO AMEMBASSY MOSCOW PRIORITY

AMEMBASSY ALGIERS PRIORITY

AMEMBASSY RABAT PRIORITY

AMEMBASSY TRIPOLI PRIORITY

AMEMBASSY PARIS PRIORITY

AMEMBASSY LONDON PRIORITY

AMEMBASSY CAIRO PRIORITY

USCINCEUR PRIORITY

C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 1 OF 2 TUNIS 3128

USCINCEUR ALSO FOR POLAD

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PFOR TS SU

SUBJECT: KOSYGIN VISIT TO TUNISIA: POLITICAL MOTIVES
AND RESULTS

REF: TUNIS 2981

SUMMARY: TUNISIAN FONMIN CHARACTERIZED KOSYGIN VISIT HERE AS
NOT UNUSUAL, AND IN LINE WITH TUNISIAN POLICY TO HAVE NORMAL,
BUT NOT TOO CLOSE, RELATIONS WITH SOVIET UNION. TWOSIDES
DISCUSSED GLOBAL ISSUES AND ACKNOWLEDGED THEIR DIFFERENCE
OVER BASIS FOR A MIDDLE EAST SETTLEMENT. RE BILATERAL
COOPERATION, SEVERAL PROPOSALS WERE MADE TO UTILIZE PRE-
EXISTING SOVIET LINE OF CREDIT FOR FURTHER DEVELOPMENTAL
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ASSISTANCE. EMBASSY VIEWS VISIT AS ESSENTIALLY AN ADD-ON

TO ALREADY SCHEDULED LIBYAN TRIP, BUT USEFUL TO SOVIETS IN VIEW OF THEIR CONTINUING INTEREST IN TUNISIAN GEOGRAPHIC LOCATION AND IN ACCESS TO TUNISIAN PORTS AND OFFSHORE WATERS. WE DO NOT THINK MIDDLE EAST SITUATION IMPELLED KOSYGIN TO VISIT TUNIS, AND INDICATIONS ARE THAT NEITHER SIDE RAISED MILITARY MATTERS. KOSYGIN MAY, HOWEVER, HAVE BEEN INTERESTED TO OFFSET RECENT HIGH-LEVEL GOT VISITS TO PEKING AND WASHINGTON, AND MAY HAVE THOUGHT TIME RIPE TO IMPROVE SOVIET POSITION HERE AT EXPENSE OF AMERICAN INTERESTS. GOT, FOR ITS PART, CONTINUES ATTACH SPECIAL IMPORTANCE TO RELATIONS WITH US AND FRANCE. WHILE VISIT PROBABLY IMPROVED CLIMATE OF SOVIET-TUNISIAN RELATIONS SOMEWHAT, IT REPRESENTS NO BASIC CHANGE IN TUNISIAN FOREIGN POLICY. END SUMMARY.

1. DURING MEETING WITH FOREIGN MINISTER CHATTI MAY 23 I ASKED HIM TO FILL ME IN ON RECENT KOSYGIN VISIT TO TUNISIA. I NOTED THAT THERE IS CONSIDERABLE SPECULATION WITHIN DIPLOMATIC COMMUNITY AS TO WHY THE VISIT TOOK PLACE. CHATTI REPLIED THAT THERE IS A TENDENCY ON THE PART OF SOME AMBASSADORS IN TUNIS TO EXAGGERATE IMPORTANCE OF KOSYGIN VISIT. CHATTI RECALLED EARLIER CONVERSATIONS WITH ME IN WHICH HE HAD OUTLINED TUNISIAN GOVERNMENT'S DESIRE, IN CONSONANCE WITH GLOBAL DETENTE ATMOSPHERE, TO IMPROVE ITS RELATIONS WITH USSR. KOSYGIN VISIT SHOULD BE VIEWED IN THIS CONTEXT. GOT SEEKS ONLY TO NORMALIZE ITS RELATIONS WITH SOVIET UNION, BUT TO GO NO FURTHER.

2. CHATTI INDICATED THAT SOME TIME AGO PRESIDENT BOURGUIBA HAD ISSUED INVITATIONS TO THE THREE MEMBERS OF THE "SOVIET TROIKA" TO VISIT TUNISIA. INVITATIONS HAD BEEN EXTENDED IN GENERAL WAY AND NO DATES HAD BEEN FIXED. CHATTI CONTINUED THAT WHILE PRIME MINISTER AND HE WERE VISITING U.S. (APRIL 29 - MAY 10) WORD ARRIVED FROM TUNIS THAT THE SOVIETS WERE PROPOSING THAT KOSYGIN VISIT TUNISIA MAY 15 FOLLOWING HIS STAY IN LIBYA. NOTING THAT NOUIRA AND CHATTI WOULD HAVE RETURNED TO TUNIS BY THIS TIME, BOURGUIBA APPROVED PROPOSED VISIT. (FRENCH AMBASSADOR, GEORGES GAUCHER, INFORMED ME THAT HE HAD SEEN PRESIDENT BOURGUIBA JUST AFTER SOVIET AMBASSADOR HAD CALLED ON BOURGUIBA TO PROPOSE KOSYGIN VISIT. BOURGUIBA CLAIMED CONFIDENTIAL

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THAT PROPOSAL CAME AS SOMEWHAT OF A SURPRISE AND HE COMMENTED THAT HE FOUND IT IMPOSSIBLE TO DO OTHERWISE THAN APPROVE.)

3. ON THE SUBSTANCE OF THE VISIT, CHATTI SAID THERE WAS NOT MUCH TO ADD TO THE TEXT OF THE OFFICIAL COMMUNIQUE (TUNIS 2981). TUNISIA DOES NOT HAVE SECRET DIPLOMACY, AND COULD NOT HAVE SECRET DIPLOMACY WITH THE SOVIETS. THE

KOSYGIN DELEGATION, SAID CHATTI, RAISED BROAD POLITICAL ISSUES AS THE SOVIETS LIKE TO DO, SUCH AS QUESTIONS OF WORLD PEACE. ON THE MIDDLE EAST, THE SOVIETS ALREADY KNEW THE TUNISIAN POSITION DIFFERED FROM THEIR OWN, THE SOVIET POSITION BEING THAT THE PRE-JUNE 1967 ARAB-ISRAELI FRONTIERS SHOULD PREVAIL. THEY HAD TOLD GOT THAT A GENEVA CONFERENCE WOULD BE GOOD ONLY IF CAREFULLY PREPARED. THEY SAID THEY HAD INFORMED EGYPT OF THEIR VIEW THAT A SETTLEMENT ON THE PRE-JUNE 1967 LINES WAS THEIR AIM. CHATTI SAID THE SOVIETS EMPHASIZED THE IMPORTANCE OF THE UPCOMING HELSINKI MEETING ON EUROPEAN SECURITY.

4. CHATTI MENTIONED A PREEXISTING SOVIET LINE OF CREDIT TO TUNISIA OF 30 MILLION RUBLES, OF WHICH HALF REMAINS AVAILABLE NOW. THE ORIGINAL TERMS, THREE PERCENT OVER TWELVE YEARS, HAD EARLIER NOT BEEN ATTRACTIVE, BUT IN TODAY'S MARKET THEY LOOKED BETTER. CHATTI SAID THE GOT HAD ASKED THE SOVIETS FOR AN EXTENSION OF THE GRACE PERIOD. THE UNUSED CREDIT WOULD BE APPLIED TO THE CONSTRUCTION OF THE JOUMINE DAM. A SECOND DAM IN WHICH GOT IS INTERESTED WAS RAISED BY GOT, BUT NO UNDERTAKING WAS GIVEN BY EITHER SIDE, AND GOT CONTINUES TO SHOP FOR FINANCING OF THIS PROJECT.

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